Westwords

1975

Volume I, Number 1
1975 Anniversary Issue
October 15, 1975

WESTWORDS
is published by
the students of
Mount St. Mary's College
12001 Chalon Road
Los Angeles, California 90049

SHARON CRISS, Editor
KATHY HALEY, Assistant Editor
ELAINE BERMAN, Advisor

Editorial Board:
MARGARET ANTCZAK
ARNOLD DAVIS
JAMES DELAHANTY
WILLIAM DOZIER
BARBARA KIMMELMAN
SISTER ELAINE KINDLE, SDSH

Art Board:
MICHELLE GERGEN
SUMIKO OI
ELAINE PRIEST

Archives
MSMC

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2012 with funding from
LYRASIS Members and Sloan Foundation

http://archive.org/details/westwordsoctober01unse

WESTWORDS means that the Mount stands on the western brink of America with its feet feeling the pacific. It means that the Mount's long tradition of well crafted words moves forward and further.

Standing here at the edge of newness the quarterly pays gratitude especially to two great teachers: Sister Marie de Lourdes who is always putting her "green thumb" to use in bringing Mount writers to flower, and Sister Dolorosa who inaugurated *INTER NOS* the first quarterly and long kept it flourishing.

WESTWORDS means also futurity, moving into new adventures with words—pioneering. It will be freighted with creative words, with reflective words. Such words spring from minds illuminated by the Spirit who broods over the bent world ordering creation into peace. They shine into other minds bringing manifestations, epiphanies: the sudden seeing of glory. And all these human words echo mysteriously the Word spoken by God the Father—a Word expressing His being.

In 1975 we are celebrating the Mount's Golden Anniversary. In 1959 the college was celebrating the first edition of Westwords, a publication that we hope still represents the Mount's high literary standards and scholastic tradition. The foreword reprinted above was written by Westword editors Elizabeth Matz and Rosemary Orsini—pioneering with words.

Californians often think of tradition only in connection with Boston and Philadelphia and Valley Forge. But the heritage of this wildly alive, madly growing state lies hidden in the peace of the early Spanish fathers and the cool mossed missions that still stand long after the fathers have gone—in the taste that Los Angelenos have for taquitos and guacamole sauce—in the names San Francisco, San Diego, San Joaquin Valley—in the murals of Cortez and Cabrillo coloring the walls of our downtown public library—in fine-worked lace and in the soft full fragrance of oranges and olives that settles under the gas fumes and the smog. It is a quiet heritage surrounded by dust and sea mist but it still works its magic up and down this vital land, blending the old with the new and the future with the past.

Although Westwords editor Linda Williams wrote this foreword eight years ago, we think her heritage paragraph is well worth repeating on the eve of our bicentennial celebration—and the Mount's "fiftieth."

TABLE OF CONTENTS

7	The Eagle's Search	BARBARA PLATTE
12	Refuge	KATHY HALEY
15	Images of Lateness in Sonnet 73	SHARON CRISS
17	Four	SISTER ALICIA McNALLY, SSL
18	Mizutaro	SUMIKO OI
21	Woman as Hero in the Tragic Vision	MARGARET ANTCZAK
28	Hitch-hiker	LINDA DELL HESCH
29	A Wreath on the Sea	LINDA DELL HESCH
34	Nemerov's "Ecce Homo"	SISTER ELAINE KINDLE, SDSH
40	From Images to Ecstasy	MONICA GREENING
47	Dusk Dreamer	SISTER ALICIA McNALLY, SSL

ART CREDITS

Cover photo by ELAINE PRIEST. Also, photographs of paintings by Elaine Priest on page 13; other photos on pages 14, 35, and 36.

Drawings by SUMIKO OI on pages 18, 20, and 40.

Ink sketch by MICHELLE GERGEN on page 29.

THE EAGLE'S SEARCH

Forest Valley is a safe and beautiful spot surrounded by high tree-covered forests. Here the old and wise Nameless Wind of Forest Valley still tells the story of Young Golden-headed Eagle to the other forest people. The story began one day, a long time ago, when a distant relative visited the Nameless Wind. Having breezed through many foreign places and having touched famous monuments and their masters, the visitor felt sophisticated around her rural cousin. She was young. Recently born of a whirlwind on the tip of an icy mountain, she impulsively rushed down the mountainside of her birthplace and across the hills and countries and coasts. She had been rushing ever since.

"Just passing through," she sighed to her cousin. "My, what a quaint place you have here . . . except I've seen so many other forest valleys just like this in so many other lands. They just all look the same." Amused at the thought of how clever and well-travelled she was, the fast little wind did a sophisticated tumble and giggled at herself.

Her youth made the old Nameless Wind think about his age. He had always been part of his ancient valley. "No place could be just like this one..." he was about to say, but the young one babbled on about her frivolous travels and prospective tours.

The sensitive ears of the forest people heard the stranger's voice and some listened to her tales. The young birds in the air stopped their songs and games to hear the traveler's whispers.

"A trade wind told me about new and exciting forests," she said in a hurried breath. "Tall forests of silver and brown with shining strange trees called 'steel' and they have tall colorful ground inhabitants. Everything grows in straight lines—it's like a different world. I'm going to find such a place," she said. "I'll wrap myself around its strange colored moving rocks."

"Colorful rocks! Shiny trees! Dark rivers!" marvelled a young golden-headed eagle who was listening to the impulsive wind. "I have never before heard of such exciting tales!" he exclaimed. He silently glided through the air with his powerful broad wings fully extended. His brown feathered body and golden head glistened in the sunlight. Like his father, the King of the sky people, the youth was strong and brave and known for his skill as a hunter. Nature had aided him with keen sight, hearing, and sense of smell. In fact, the youth was the best hunter of all young birds in Forest Valley and he often helped his mother and her newly hatched babies by bringing a mouse or snake or stalk of seeds home to the nest. But now he and his friends put aside hunting to wonder at the news of the wind.

Without a warning, the visiting wind suddenly declared, "Well, I'm off and goodbye!" and in a burst of energy she poofed over the mountain ridge before her cousin could even answer back.

"She will most certainly blow out before long," the wise wind thought to himself. "But it is a waste of good wind to give advice to one who will never stop or listen." The Nameless Wind steadily continued his ancient route around and across, up and down the valley bowl. He found satisfaction in his duties. He dispersed the rain and seeds over the land and cleaned the trees of their dead leaves, needles and twigs. He enjoyed tickling the waters of the pool and ruffling the feathers of his friends. He carried the sky people and clouds across the valley ceiling. It made him sad to picture the impulsive little wind spending her last wasted breath in the sand of a far off desert.

The old wind heard the young goldenheaded flyer call

to his companions, "We must also see those new forests."

"But what about our mothers and fathers and brothers and sisters and our nests-to-be?" they called back.

"There are many forests just like this one," he answered. "I'm not afraid to be the first to seek for something new!" and in that one quick moment he decided to spread his strong young wings and set out alone.

The wise wind who had so often sung to the goldenheaded one and who had carried him in the air, thought the eagle might listen as he had before. The wind called in his ancient whispers to the runaway,

Don't fly from home
Come back please come,
What song will you sing
In a place far away?
Young prince, please stay.

But the wilder call of adventure pulled on the heart of the bird. It made him feel daring and brave but he knew he was also afraid. So, trying to sound fearless, he called back a last song to his forest people.

I seek for the thrill of a forest of steel,
With strong trees that shine and grow in a straight line
With rivers of stone—I'll go there alone.

Without even looking back on his home or valley or his parents or friends, he soared through the air over the crest of the valley bowl and disappeared.

The farther he flew from home, the farther his newly found bravery flew from his heart. The pilgrim began to realize that he had left without directions of any sort and the descriptions were, after all, vague. In order to forget his fears, he imagined new and exciting forests with great high places for building nests and beautiful green meadows for hunting plump ground animals. He envisioned a paradise for eagles and other sky people.

Then he remembered, "Moving rocks—there may also be dangers I'm not accustomed to fighting." He felt a shiver under his feathers, "But I'll prove my courage in the face of all dangers that challenge me," he said hurriedly.

The goldenheaded eagle flew on and on over many

green mountains and valleys that reminded him of home. He saw no brown and silver forests. "Browns will give me camouflage," he hoped, and continued his journey into the first night.

The air became cold and the unfamiliar winds intimidated the traveller. He spent that sleepless night shivering alone on a high branch of a tree where hopefully no night prowlers could reach him. When the sky first opened its eyes to the sun's light, he began his search for breakfast, but the joy was gone from his hunt. He had no family to treat with his catch—no playmates at whose side he could hunt.

"No!" he said, "I've left all behind and I will go on!" He tried to swallow a brown grasshopper and some dry seeds for his lonely breakfast.

His journey continued for days and weeks. He saw no sight of new and strange forests of brown and silver. He only passed mountains and valleys of forests which reminded him of how far from home he was. Sometimes, thoughts of adventure and of a glorious return home would spark his heart, but often he was cold and lonely and sadly wishing for the company of his family and friends.

Finally, the forests became less dense and the treetops began looking brown and brittle. Rivers became sparse and the lakes sometimes seemed muddy and old. They smelled a queer odor which made him afraid. Flying, flying for days without end, spending dark nights on deserted trees and rocks, he became tired to the point of despair. He hardly noticed the plains and coasts and towns he crossed. He didn't even see the changes in the sky which was becoming less blue and more grey-brown in the sunlight. He did however, notice that he was becoming more tired, and his lungs and body ached at night as they never had before.

He saw strangely shaped rocks here and there, with tops the color of sunset or the dark green of pine. He saw more and more such rocks surrounded by broad plains of plants in straight rows. Once he perched on such a tree-straight boulder with a top as red as the eyes of the hawk and with sides as white as the sand of the pools. His claw feet told him that he sat not on stone, and his heart quivered in his

chest. He continued his search through that night, troubled and weary.

The goldenheaded eagle flew for what seemed like years. He had travelled more days than he had feathers. The pine-straight boulders with colored tops made of tree, grew closer and closer together so that fewer real trees could be found. Finally, in the heat of a summer noon, the tired traveller flapped and strained up the side of a brushcovered mountain. With a last effort of his weakened wings the bird crossed the high ridge. Suddenly, he stopped in mid-air, his yellow beak open and his round eyes staring. He could see before him at a distance, a spreading gigantic brown cloud of ash and greasy grey dust covering a jungle of silver-tinted boulders. These were so tall that their straight, flat heads loomed above the horrible cloud. The air burned the eagle's staring eyes and choked at his throat. As he struggled to breathe, he discovered that he could no longer fly. The grieved heart of the poor despairing youth had grown so heavy with sorrow that his tired wings could not bear the terrible weight of his heart. He fell down through the hazy air and landed on the top of a foothill which his wings seemed to cover. The body of the weary traveller grew in both size and weight and sank with heavy despair deep into the earth. Finally, the eagle, now old from his lonely journey, was covered and hidden in the tall round hill. Nothing of him remained but his noble hunter's head, now large and hard. It was the color of the grey forest which his stone eyes stared down upon, forever more.

THE END

NOTE TO THE READER: A huge grey stone, the shape of an eagle's head with the distinctive markings of an eagle's beak can be seen on the top of a hill in the northeastern part of Los Angeles called "Eagle Rock." There are old Indian legends and myths about this phenomenon of our community. This has been my own attempt at explaining the origin of the Eagle Rock in fantasy and myth.

BARBARA PLATTE

REFUGE

Lost and frightened—searching for someplace
to hide

Perhaps in music—concealed between the slurs
and dynamics—skipping from note to note

Briefly resting—but then on the run again

Up and down—highs and lows—but will a note
be hit that cannot be resolved?

Jumping intervals in time and space—searching
desperately for someplace to hide.

If no respite be found here—then perhaps in
writing

Hidden between carefully balanced phrases—
dashing around barriers that will make others pause

Beginnings and ends—prologues and epilogues—
but will a climax be reached that has no relief?

Pushing onward from scene to scene—searching
wildly for someplace to hide.

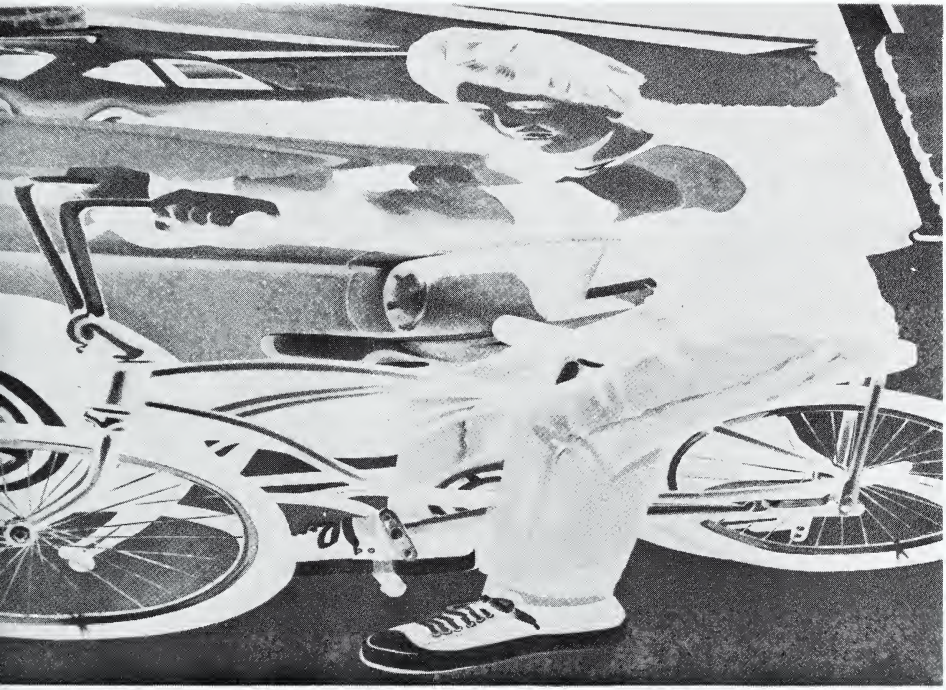
But there is no reason to run—the creativity
of either is outlet enough.

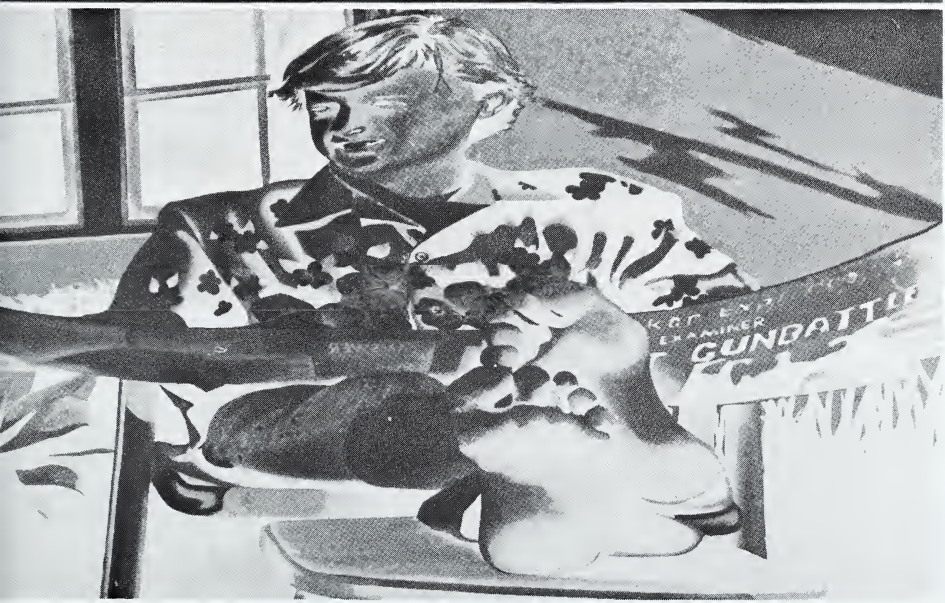
For fear and loneliness, joy and merriment can be
expressed by both.

There is no need to hide.

Rise, reveal yourself and be free, and share this
happiness with the world.

KATHY HALEY





13

Elaine Priest

Elaine Priest photo

IMAGES OF LATENESS IN SONNET 73

Sonnet 73 by Shakespeare is written in the framework of his favorite three quatrains and a couplet. Each quatrain is a complete image of lateness be it of a season, of a day, or of a fire. Also detectable is a movement of time between the three quatrains from day, to twilight, to nightfall which can be taken as indicating the speaker's increasing nearness to death. Generally speaking, this is a sonnet about love in which the speaker is trying to prepare his loved one for his approaching demise.

That time of year thou mayst in me behold
When yellow leaves, or none, or few, do hang
Upon those boughs which shake against the cold,
Bare ruined choirs, where late the sweet birds sang.

The first quatrain describes late autumn just before the onset of winter and the death of the old year. So also is the speaker describing his own time of life. He is old as the year is old and his winter/death is not far off. Notice the reference to the tree limbs which "shake against the cold" in much the same way that an elderly person might shiver when chilled. The speaker reminds the person to whom he is talking that he is old now and wasting away.

In me thou see'st the twilight of such day
As after sunset fadeth in the west;
Which by and by black night doth take away,
Death's second self that seals up all in rest.

Now the poet moves from what might be considered day in the cold funereal forest to the twilight that comes before the darkness of night. Considered carefully, the progression of time between the three quatrains might be understood as the speaker gently drawing his loved one closer to the approaching fact of his own death by comparing his life to the movement within a day.

"Black night doth take away" all that remains of the light of day while sleep, "death's second self," "seals up," as in a coffin, people "in rest." This could suggest that the speaker is prepared to leave life as quietly and as unobtrusively as night falls and people drift into sleep. The speaker is once again comparing two cycles. This time it is the day/night cycle and his life's cycle with references once again to death.

In me thou see'st the glowing of such fire,
That on the ashes of his youth doth lie,
As the deathbed whereon it must expire,
Consumed with that which it was nourished by.

Once again the speaker uses an image of lateness. Now it is a fire which has died down to its last glow. The speaker implies that his last spark of life is as tenuous as the faint sparks that remain huddled in the ashes. All of the speaker's years of living and loving are threatening to deaden the last warm sparks of life just as the surviving glow of the fire is close to being smothered by the ashes of the wood the the fire has already consumed. The time element has shifted once more and now it is night. The later in the day cycle the speaker refers to, the later in his own life cycle is he speaking about.

The poem ends with a couplet.

This thou perceiv'st, which makes thy love more strong,
To love that well which thou must leave ere long.

Before the speaker seemed to be describing himself to his loved one, a lover perhaps, whereas now he appears to be

addressing her directly and describes her reaction to all that he has said before. However, the speaker need not necessarily be addressing a woman but might just as well be talking to a young friend, male or female, or even as a father to his son. But he is still trying to prepare that particular person for the speaker's own demise. What, in effect, the speaker says is that his loved one cares even more for him now because he/she knows the speaker may soon die. These last two lines pinpoint the main idea of the sonnet by briefly summarizing what has been said in the previous twelve lines.

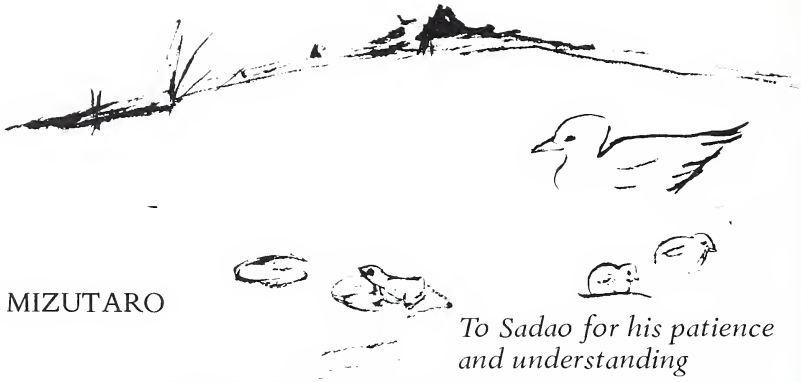
This sonnet has the speaker comparing his life to three images of lateness. Each quatrain where the images are found has its own time of day implied which serves as a gentle movement from life to death as seen by the speaker. In these fourteen lines Shakespeare manages to convey the idea of a life cycle within the day/twilight/night cycle. Somehow his final couplet not only serves as a climax to the three quatrains but it also seems to be a fitting end to the cycle of the sonnet itself.

SHARON CRISS

FOUR

Her eyes dance
New as spring, sing,
Flicker, glow within.
Her face quivers
Like bubbles bursting.
She greets surprise.

SISTER ALICIA McNALLY, SSL



MIZUTARO

To Sadao for his patience and understanding

A gentle stream rippled along the side of the old house with a roof of rice weeds and floor of cold earth. For many years a happy man and his wife lived here. For many years they had yearned for a son.

Each morning after he had his bowl of rice, some pickled turnips and green tea, the old man left to work in the rice fields nearby while his wife tidied their little house. She liked to go to the neighboring stream to do her daily washing.

One day the old man announced that it was time for him to go out to the sea again in his boat to catch some fish, for their supply of food was dwindling and the cold winds from the north would soon come.

So the next morning the wife bade the old man goodbye and went about her daily chores. She went to the stream with her basket of laundry.

She felt very lonely this day for she knew that her husband would not return home until it was dark into the night.

She looked towards the stream and saw the frogs playfully leaping from one lily pad to another. She saw the baby ducks following hurriedly after their mother in search of food. How happy mother duck must be caring for her little ones. If only we had a son, she thought.

I would have him by my side and when the March winds came I would watch him fly his kite. His father would teach him to fish and when he became older his father would take him in his boat and teach him to fish in the deep waters. Tears began to swell in her eyes.

Suddenly she heard a strange thump clunk! She looked up towards the bend of the stream and saw three huge

peaches floating down towards her, each making a loud thump as it slammed into the rock in the middle of the stream.

How fortunate, thought the woman, I will catch one of the peaches and when my husband comes home tonight we will have it for supper. Yes, I will catch the largest of the three, she said to herself. The peach was so huge she needed both hands to carry it inside.

She no longer felt sad and lonely. She prepared her husband's favorite supper and anxiously awaited his return.

The old man came home shortly after the sun had disappeared beyond the horizon, tired and weary for fish were nowhere in sight this day.

"I have a surprise for you my husband but first you must eat. You will feel much better," said she. The old man ate and when he had finished the last morsel of rice he asked his wife about the surprise.

"Look," she said, "this huge peach came rolling down the stream today and I thought how nice to have it for dessert." "It is a large peach!" said the man as his wife placed it on the table.

"Well, cut it," he said, "and let us see if it tastes as good as it looks." At this the woman had barely touched the surface of the peach with a sharp knife when it suddenly broke in half.

There in the hollow of the peach lay a baby. The man and his wife stared in astonishment. "My wife!" said he, "our prayers have been answered! Quickly cover the baby with a blanket!" "And the baby is a boy!" she exclaimed.

They did not sleep that night for they were overcome with joy. "We will name him after the water of life from whence he came. We will call him Mizutaro," said the old man.

Mizutaro grew up to be a fine young man. He said to himself, I will make my parents happy for the remaining years because they have worked hard. Their shoulders are bent, the heavy burden of the years is upon them.

So Mizutaro begged them to leave their old house with the cold hard dirt floor. "But we have lived in this house since long before you came to us, my son," said his father. "And we are happy here," said his mother.

"But you are no longer able to care for yourselves and I want you both to be near me, for the Emperor has called for my services," said Mizutaro, "and I must take leave at once."

With much sadness Mizutaro's father and mother gathered their belongings and moved to a fine house high on the hill.

Their sadness soon left them for they were proud that the Emperor had found Mizutaro to be worthy.

Cold winds from the north began to blow but their new home was warm and like a palace with a veranda around the entire house. The old man and woman would each morning step out to the east veranda to greet the rising sun.

They bowed low and humbly thanked their Lord for answering their prayers for a son. Each evening they stepped out to the west veranda to tell the setting sun farewell, and watched for Mizutaro to return home from the palace.

When they saw him approaching through the forest path, they again bowed low and thanked their Lord for their fine son.

"Come my wife," the old man would say, "let us go inside and make ready for the tea."

SUMIKO OI

Illustrated by the author

WOMAN AS HERO IN THE TRAGIC VISION

Suffering through a lonely journey to greatness, the tragic hero of Sophoclean drama is characterized by "loyalty to his conception of himself. He firmly acknowledges the necessity to perform the action that conception imposes."[1]

This loyalty to personal conviction is also the essential ingredient of the woman as hero in the tragic novel. Conceived in the same tragic vision which moved Sophocles to create Antigone, the woman as hero emerges as a person of genuine human substance. Created within the tragic tradition, one that focuses on the essential qualities of human character, the woman hero is no plastic heroine. The nineteenth century novelists who created novels in which "a woman would bear the burden of the tragic action," affirmed woman's rightful position alongside the male hero.[2] These writers "chose women heroes not out of any urge to fight the feminist battle, but because woman's place in the universe provided the proper metaphor for the place of the heroic in a work of literary art." (Heilbrun, p. 29.) These novelists acknowledged that because a woman is a person, equal to man, her life experience can serve as a "metaphor" for the universal human experience.

Nathaniel Hawthorne created Hester Prynne in *The Scarlet Letter* with this androgynous, tragic vision. As a tragic hero, Hester resembles Antigone who, in the tradition of the tragic hero, "makes a decision which springs from the deepest layer of [her] inner nature" and maintains it heroically despite opposition. (Knox, p. 5.)

Like Antigone, Hester exhibits a passionate, willful nature and a sure sense of self. She acts, refusing to be acted upon. She chooses, accepting the full consequences of her choices. Hester fails and falls but, like Antigone, rises and triumphs through her suffering.

Although born centuries apart, Antigone, the Theban princess, and Hester, the Puritan adulteress, fight the same battle. Both seeking to know "what it means to be," they struggle to be accepted as persons.[3] Hester and Antigone both question the worth of an existence in which their personhood is denied because of their sex.

In her effort "to be" Antigone responds instinctively and humanely to her natural feelings of obligation to her slain brother, Polynices. She disobeys the king's order forbidding anyone to perform the burial rite for Polynices. By her action, Antigone not only commits an act of civil disobedience but flaunts every convention of "proper" female behavior. Antigone shocks her sister, Ismene, with her bold plan. Isemene cautions her sister.

> Think how we shall perish, more miserably than all the rest if, in defiance of the law, we brave a king's decree or his powers. Nay, we must remember, first, that we were born women, who should not strive with men; next that we are ruled of the stronger, so that we must obey in these things, and in all things still harder . . . . It is foolish to meddle.[4]

Disgusted by Ismene's submissiveness and passivity, Antigone lashes out. "Be what you will, I will bury him; well for me to die in doing so. I shall rest, a loved one with him whom I have loved, sinless in my crime." (p. 84.)

When Antigone is captured and brought before Creon, King of Thebes, she boldly admits her guilt, meeting Creon's rage with defiant dignity. Her "unwomanly" courage and boldness enrage Creon and wound his male pride. A woman has performed a deed which no man in Thebes had the courage to carry out. Her "insolence" strengthens his resolve to punish her. "Now truly I am no man, she is the man, if this victory shall rest with her and bring no penalty." (p. 92.)

Enraged by Antigone's willful disobedience, Creon cannot comprehend her motives for performing such an outrageous deed. He cannot see that her spirited defiance derives from her compassion and a sense of duty that overrides civil laws. He cannot understand how she can honor a traitorous

brother. "A foe is never a friend—not even in death." Antigone responds calmly. "It is not my nature to join in hating, but in loving." Creon angrily dismisses her to her fate. "Pass then to the world of the dead, and if you must needs love, love there. While I live no woman shall rule me." (p. 93.) Considering compassion a woman's weakness, Creon crushes his own "feminine impulse" and denies Antigone her "masculine impulse."

Antigone is condemned to die for responding with human compassion to an obligation of kinship and love. Disregarding both the law and the restrictions of her feminine role, she has dared to be human and, as a result, must die.

Antigone does not go to her death without some regret for the things which she has sacrificed. She has given up marriage, a family, a future—all the joys of womanhood—rather than betray herself. "No bridal bed, no bridal song has been mine, no joy of marriage, no portion in the nurture of children; forlorn of friends, unhappy me, I go living to the vaults of death." (p. 101.)

The Chorus assures her of the rightness of her sacrifice. "Mistress of your own fate, and still alive you shall pass to Hades as no other mortal kind has passed . . . . it is a great renown for a woman who has perished that she should have shared the doom of the godlike, in her life and afterward in death." (p. 100.)

As Antigone is led away to her death, Haemon, Antigone's betrothed and Creon's son, pleads with his father for Antigone's life. Creon will not yield. Wrathfully he curses his son. "O dastard nature, yielding place to woman!"

Creon stubbornly holds out until the blind prophet Teiresias warns him of his folly.

> Think, then on these things, my son, All men are liable to err, But when an error has been made, that man is no longer witless or unblessed who heals the ill unto which he has fallen and does not remain stubborn. (p. 104.)

That Teiresias is the only one who can help Creon to see reason is of special significance. As an important androgynous in Greek drama, Teiresias sees clearly into human

nature because he has been both man and woman. He pleads for understanding between the sexes, seeing the disastrous results occurring when one sex denies respect and personhood to the other.

> Teiresias sees clearly enough in Antigone that the edicts of Creon and the attitudes he shares with Ismene are wrong; it was wrong not only to refuse Polynices, but to condemn Antigone for obeying the human instinct and the divine law requiring burial. (Heilbrun, p. 12.)

When Creon finally relents, it is too late. Antigone, truly "the mistress of her fate" has already taken her own life. Although Antigone has died, she has achieved victory in her struggle "to be." Through her death she has "humanized the community" of Thebes, forcing it to "reassess its own severe and absolute dogmas." (Sewall, p. 90.) Through her courageous actions and her death, Antigone has become a model of human greatness—a hero for both men and women. She has made her mark as a woman and a person.

Teiresias' plea for human understanding, forgiveness, and allowance for human error—a plea against a pride which denies the fullness of personhood to others, is Hester Prynne's plea in *The Scarlet Letter.*

Shunned by the Puritan community as a type of sin, a betrayer of her sex, Hester endures a long, lonely struggle in her effort "to be."

Possessing the same passion, the "rage of the soul" that fires Antigone, Hester rebels against the undue harshness of her punishment. (Knox. p. 29.) In defiance she lavishly embroiders the scarlet letter which she must wear as a reminder of her sin. "She accepted, yet defied. She wore the "A" as the sign of her sin which she publicly acknowledged—but she wore it on her own terms. Preserving a margin of freedom, she asserted the partial justice of her cause." (Sewall, p. 87.)

Although Hester admits her guilt, she is convinced that the love she shared with Arthur Dimmesdale "had a consecration of its own." She strikes out against the unmerciful condemnation inflicted upon her. She rebels against a code

which straitjackets human nature and refuses to forgive human error.

"Characterized by a certain state and dignity," Hester is very much like Antigone.[5] She resembles Antigone in her strong sense of duty to her loved ones. Hester considers her obligation to her lover, Arthur Dimmesdale, to be real and binding. More courageous than Mr. Dimmesdale, Hester accepts and endures her public humiliation. She chooses to hide his identity and assumes the full burden of their punishment.

Although Hester anticipates the misery of the long years ahead, she chooses to remain at the scene of her sin to live out her punishment. She knows that throughout the years, "giving up her individuality, she would become the general symbol . . . . of woman's frailty and sinful passion." (p. 79.)

Like Antigone, Hester must bear her trial alone and unsupported. Hester's isolation is greater and more prolonged than Antigone's. At least Antigone has the sympathy of the people of Thebes. Hester, however, is "banished, and as much alone as if she inhabited another sphere, or communicated with the common nature by other organs and senses than the rest of womankind." (p. 85.)

Ironically, it is through this alienation that Hester experiences a freedom unlike any she has experienced before. "The tendency of her fate and fortunes had been to set her free. The scarlet letter was her passport into regions where other women dared not tread." (p. 205.)

Living without any adult companionship in her cottage by the sea, Hester turned in a great measure, from passion and feeling to thought." Having tossed away the "fragments of the broken chain" which link her to the world of Boston, Hester discovers a new world—the one within her mind.

> The world's law was no law for her mind . . . She assumed a freedom of speculation . . . which our forefathers, had they known it, would have held to be a deadlier crime than that stigmatized by the scarlet letter. In her lonesome cottage, by

> the seashore, thoughts visited her, such as dared to enter no other dwelling in New England. (p. 168.)

In her mental explorations, Hester frequently contemplates the meaning and worth of her existence as a woman. She sees in her little Pearl elements of her own "lawless passion" and fears for her daughter's future in a world intolerant of such a nature.

Hester often wondered "in bitterness of heart, whether it was for ill or good that the poor little creature had been born at all. Indeed the same dark question often arose into her mind with reference to the whole race of womanhood. Was existence worth accepting? As concerned her own individual existence, she had long ago decided in the negative and dismissed the point as settled." (p. 170.)

Hester views the future of womankind with little hope, realizing that

> In order for women to achieve their rightful position, the whole system of society is to be torn down, and built up anew. Then the very nature of the opposite sex, or its long hereditary habit, which has become like nature, is to be essentially modified, before woman can be allowed to assume what seems a fair and suitable position. (p. 170.)

Her sensitive, intelligent mind enlightened by these wanderings "in the dark labyrinth of the mind," Hester achieves a heightened insight into herself and others.

Fortified by her new understanding, Hester is able to confront the two men in her life with greater wisdom and courage.

> Strengthened by years of hard and solemn trial, she felt herself no longer so inadequate to cope with Roger Chillingworth. She had climbed to a higher point. The old man, on the other hand, had brought himself nearer to her level, or perhaps below it, by the revenge which he had stooped for. (p. 171.)

Wiser and stronger, Hester is able to give Arthur Dimmesdale new strength. "Exchange this false life for a

new one . . . Preach! Write! Act! Do anything save to lie down and die!" (p. 203.)

In this anguished plea Hester reveals her passionate love for life—her longing for a full, vibrant, and vigorous existence as a woman and a person. Through her years of humiliation and suffering, Hester's desire for this fulfillment has not decreased. Even in her old age, when women seek her advice, she assures them of her belief that "at some brighter period . . . . a new truth would be revealed, in order to establish the whole relation between man and women on a surer ground of mutual happiness." (p. 269.)

Through the years, the stigma surrounding Hester and the scarlet letter melts away. The scarlet emblem takes on a new significance for the people of the Puritan community. It is now a symbol of respect for her "ableness." Formerly a living symbol of sin, Hester has gained respect and attained greatness, through her courageous suffering and endurance.

Loyal to her conception of self, Hester has endured the painful journey of the tragic hero from obscurity to greatness. Like Antigone, she has made a difference in her world because she is a person who is a woman.

MARGARET ANTCZAK

[1] *Bernard M.W. Knox, THE HEROIC TEMPER (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1964), p. 28. Future references in the text will be to this edition.*

[2] *Carolyn Heilbrun, TOWARD A RECOGNITION OF ANDROGYNY (New York; Alfred A. Knopf, 1973), p. 49. Future references in the text will be to this edition.*

[3] *Richard B. Sewall, THE VISION OF TRAGEDY (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959), p. 4. Future references in the text will be to this edition.*

[4] *Sophocles, "Antigone," GREEK DRAMA, ed. Moses Hadas (New York: Bantam Books, Inc., 1965), p. 83. Future references will be indicated by page number only.*

[5] *Nathaniel Hawthorne, THE SCARLET LETTER, in Works of Nathaniel Hawthorne, (New York: Walter J. Black Co., 1923), p. 53. Future references will be indicated by page number only.*

HITCH–HIKER

Hear that diesel?
God drives that truck. Takes all the runs.
        He must have seen me,
                He's put in the clutch, gears
                grind into third, accelerator
                whines on the floor.
Zero to sixty in fifteen seconds.
You going to run me over God?
Go find someone else, please
to waffle-iron in the road like buzzard bait.
Just leave me here, my thumb pointing east
until one of these runs when you finally stop
to pick me up.

LINDA DELL HESCH

Drawing by Michelle Gergen

A WREATH ON THE SEA

One, two, one, two. Going to school.

Scott counted his steps.

One, two. Going to school.

"Hey Scotty, wait!"

Now what? He waited to hear Muriel puff as she tried to catch up with him. Her short breathing choked like sobs in her throat. I'll bet she'll cry, that Muriel-Monster. Just wait and see. He kept on without slowing down; not even

when the dull thud of her heels ceased, not even when paper grating on paper, falling on grass and flying down the street rattled his ears.

"Help me, Scotty." Muriel wailed.

"Pick 'em up yourself. You dropped 'em." he shouted back, adding just loud enough for her to hear, "Muriel-Monster."

"Scottyyy. Stop teasin' me!"

His feet stopped, and Scott turned to stare at her. Muriel's arms hung empty at her sides with a mass of books at her feet. She sniffed and rubbed her eyes.

"Aw, shut up, you big baby. I'll hold some for ya."

"'Sides," she said. "We're gonna be late today an' it's all your fault."

"Late?" Scott remembered his last warning on that particular subject. "Well it ain't gonna be *my* fault if *you're* late. See ya later!" and he caught a stiff breeze, sailing away from his sister.

See, he thought, how fast I can go even with all these books. Even against the wind. I'll bet she dropped 'em on purpose, that Muriel-Monster. He pulled his jacket zipper down, letting a cold tingle run through his t-shirt.

Now she'll never catch up. Not in a million years. I'll go to sea and I won't go back to school and I'll never see her again.

"Scotty, wait for me!" Muriel's voice drowned into a wave, rocking his tall-masted brig.

The young seaman sailed past the aluminum post, slapping it as he flew, gripping it with his knotty, salt-encrusted hand. He swung almost in midair through a set of gates and up a gangplank. The schoolyard. Not a ship. A schoolyard. Scott pulled himself apart and caught up with his body. Children ran past him and a bell rang in his ears.

"Time. Time. Time. It's almost eight. I'm nearly late." panted Scott as he smashed into the end of the sixth grade line. The boys stumbled like dominoes, recovering just in time to salute the flag.

"Oh, say can you see . . ." boomed an anonymous baritone over the loudspeaker.

Sure I can, Scotty agreed. I can see a red spot on the playground. Closer and closer. One red Muriel-Monster.

She shuffled past the sixth, fifth, and fourth grades without lifting her head, and took her place at the end of the second grade line.

She's mad. What if she tells? Scott fidgeted until the morning ritual ended, then slipped over to hand her the books.

"I'm sorry, Muriel." he said, but the little girl offered no reply.

"Well, don't even thank me!" he added, but Muriel followed the rest of her class in. Up a gangplank, he thought, and all he could do was watch until the tardy bell rang him back to an empty playground.

Not again. Oh no! That Muriel-Monster . . . In a gulp Scott chased after the rest of his class, but they were already inside.

"Adams, Gina."

Wait, please.

"Carter, Matthew."

Mistah Christian! Oh, but I'm coming. I'm coming!

"Ernemeyer, Herbie."

"Here." Herbie replied, just as Scott tiptoed into the room.

"Fenwick, Scott."

"Here." It echoed off the blackboard. In horror Scott realized he was standing in the center of the room. Not ten feet in front of him, Captain Bligh's blue-green paisley tie spread across his belly, serving as a sort of vertical cummerbund.

"Don't you think that by the sixth grade you ought to be able to tell time, Scott?" asked Mr. Bonner. The teacher pushed his spectacles to the bridge of his nose and peered at Scott.

"Yessir." the boy replied. Gina Adams giggled, send-

ing a wave of tittering across the room.

—I fail, said Mistah Christian, to see the humor in the situation.

"You can sit down now."

Scott sat. No; he looks like Blackbeard. Without the spectacles and the receding hairline, he looks like Blackbeard.

"By the way, Scott, I'd like to see you at recess."

Scott glanced at the clock above the blackboard. Eight bells—only one more hour to doomsday, he thought.

In that doomsday hour, while the rest of the class multiplied fractions, Scott set sail on a brig headed for Madagascar. He followed his compass, his sextant, and the North Star. But for some reason, he couldn't seem to shake that pirate from his tail.

Damn you, Blackbeard. How can I get to Madagascar with your skull-and-crossbones forever off the portside.

"Scott." Mr. Bonner shook him off the deck and into an empty classroom. "This is the fifth time you've been late this month. Have you any explanation for this?"

Scott shook his head. Below the plank, water reflected the toes of his sneakers. The tip of a sword tickled him on the spine. What's the use of saying a Muriel-Monster got him? Who would believe it? Only Muriel, but she would never admit it. She held the sword.

"In that case," continued the teacher, "all it seems to be is a case of gross irresponsibility. I'm afraid I'm going to have to call your parents."

"What!" Scott came to with a start.

"I've done everything I could, Scott. It's up to them now."

"But . . ." Scott began. He closed his eyes, stiffening to the sound of a leather belt being drawn through pant loops. "Don't call. I'll never be late again. Honest."

"You've promised before, Scott. I have to do it. You know it's time you learned . . ."

Learned what? Scott wanted to yell, but he didn't. He let Mr. Bonner finish the lecture and sat in all the rest of recess. After lunch, Blackbeard stole his turn at reading be-

cause Scott was not paying attention.

"That could be another red mark," he said, but Scott knew that by this time, one more wouldn't make a difference. What could a red mark be, anyway, but one more scratch among the deep wounds already earned in the thick of battle. That's a noble thought. He ran it over and over in his head until the end of class.

On the way home, Scott wondered if the fifty cents in his back pocket was enough busfare to take him to the pier. He had seen a sailing ship at the pier once. Maybe it would still be there. He thought of what the captain would say when he came to sign on.

"Well, me laddie, it's not an easy go out there. But you seem to be a brave young man. There's no harm in puttin' a little more guts on board this trip."

Muriel went out with him, and he rescued her from the raging sea. She screamed for help and he dove in after her.

"Oh Scott, my dearest brother," she would say, clinging to him. "How could I ever have been so cruel to you?"

His mother kissed his forehead and his father slapped him on the back.

"Have a cigar, son, now that you're really a man . . ."

That Muriel-Monster gets home earlier. I'll bet she finked. The screen door slammed, echoing louder and louder as he walked into the house. In the living room, Muriel sat in Daddy's chair, pretending to read a book.

"Hi Muriel."

"Mama want you." Muriel answered without looking at him.

"No sir!" he shook his head and scowled at her.

"Scott, is that you?" A voice came from the hall.

"Yes, Mama."

"Come back to the den for a minute. There's something I would like to discuss with you."

"See!" Muriel hissed, but Scott did not respond. After all, what could one more red mark be but a scratch among deep wounds, all earned in the thick of battle.

LINDA DELL HESCH

NEMEROV'S "ECCE HOMO"

Quoting Pilate in John's Gospel, Howard Nemerov says: "Behold the man."[1] Like Pilate, his words are satirical. The use of satire in varying intensities to underline man's passive relationship to society is frequent in his poetry. It is particularly evident in the three poems "A Way of Life,"[2] "Make Love Not War" (p. 45), and "Life Cycle of Common Man" (p. 16). The tone of these poems moves from a cautious attitude of tolerance in the first poem to that of bitter rebellion in the second. The tone of the third poem moves finally to a rueful awareness, but not condemnation, of man shaped by society. The satirical tone of these poems varies in intensity, yet the underlying message is the same: it wittily invites man to be aware and to beware of lightly accepting his role in society. The satirical tone of the last two poems also draws upon biblical allusion to strengthen their force.

"A Way of Life" is a picture of love and violence in society as it is depicted by television programs interwoven with commercials. Although life consists of both good and bad, the speaker is cautious in his total acceptance of such an existence. The last lines of the poem capture this ambivalence:

> A lot of violence . . .
> But there's a lot of love, too, mixed with the strife,
> And kitchen-kindness, like a bedtime story
> With rich food and a more kissable depilatory.
> Still, I keep my weapons handy, sitting here
> Smoking and shaving and drinking the dry beer.
> (lines 34-40)

The contrast is between the traditional American life and modern American life as the speaker sees it. Words like "kitchen-kindness" and "a bedtime story" call to mind a cozy picture of "folksy" American existence. Here there is love and warmth. Yet there is also an attitude of luxuriousness. It consists of the "good life," of "rich food," and hairless faces that are smooth to the touch and "more kissable." The scene is contentment and security.

Although enjoying the comfort of this life, "sitting

Elaine Priest photos

here/Smoking and shaving and drinking the dry beer" (line 40), the speaker finds another element with which to contend. In the midst of this ease there is violence which makes it necessary to "keep my weapons handy" (line 39). Life consists of good and bad, love and violence, and man must deal with it. Thus, the speaker of this poem points out the polarities in society. Society consists of both the comfortable, easy life, and the more dangerous, violent life.

The title of the second poem, "Make Love Not War," suggests that it, too, should deal with violence. But it actually looks at relationships between "lovers everywhere" (line 1) who continue to have children in abundance without much thought to the consequences. This poem makes fun of mechanically following instruction books. The tone of this poem moves toward bitter sarcasm as the speaker points out how:

> Lovers reading the instructions in comic books
> Are turning out babies according to the instructions; this
> Progression is said by demographers to be geometric and
> Accelerating the rate of its acceleration. Lovers abed
> Read up the demographers' reports and accordingly produce
> Babies. (lines 3–8)

The speaker shows his concern with man in society, aware that he is patterning his life on imitation . . . to the extreme of learning from "comic books" (line 3). Thus, in this poem, people equate procreation with "Progression" (line 5). There are Malthusian overtones alluded to insofar as this "Progression . . . is geometric and/accelerating the rate of its acceleration" (lines 3–4).

These overtones suggest two kinds of irresponsibility. The first refers to Malthus' theory. (The rate of population increases geometrically while the rate of subsistence increases only arithmetically.) By allusion to this theory, the speaker touches upon the irresponsibility of a society which continues to reproduce without considering the consequences.

The second type of irresponsibility refers to people who have children not so much out of mutual love, but because they are conditioned to do so. They are not truly alive. They strive to keep up with the "demographers'

reports" (line 7). They view these reports more as a command even though the result will create "new and underdeveloped nations" (line 9).

The bitter tone increases as the speaker makes use of biblical allusion in the last stanza. The second line recalls God's command to the first people and the third line refers to God's covenant with Abraham:

> Increase! Be fruitful! Multiply! Divide!
> Be as the sands of the sea, the stars in the firmament.
> (lines 41–42)

The above lines provide a sharp contrast to the earlier part of the poem. These words imply, when taken together with the rest of the poem, that something has gone wrong. God gave a command and it was followed; man did "increase" (line 41), he did become "as the sands of the sea" (line 42). Yet the speaker sees this not as people obeying God's command, but using this command to justify their own actions. The command has become an excuse; man has failed to think at all.

"Life Cycle of Common Man" shows the emptiness of man's existence. Although the "average consumer of the middle class" (line 2) uses a vast quantity of food and drink, his life remains shallow. Considering "all that" (line 37) he does use for survival, his life consists mainly of fruitless talk. This poem condenses its essence into the last stanza:

> Consider the courage in all that, and behold the man
> Walking into deep silence, with the ectoplastic
> Cartoon's balloon of speech proceeding
> Steadily out of the front of his face, the words
> Telling the numberless talk of his untold Word
> Which makes the world his apple, and forces him to
> eat. (line 37–43)

The first line of this stanza contains subtle irony. "Courage" suggests a firmness of mind, a bravery, yet "all that" (line 37) refers to the manner in which man eats and talks his way through life. Together then, the invitation to "consider the courage in all that" (line 37) creates a striking contradiction. There is no courage needed to maintain the life cycle presented by the speaker. To him man resembles a cartoon

character with "the ectoplastic/cartoon's balloon of speech" (line 38) coming out of his face. He is de-humanized even more by the image coming, not from his mouth, but from the "front of his face" (line 40), almost as if they were put there by someone else. Moreover, although he talks a great deal, his "numberless tales" (line 42) are not sufficient to enable him to communicate fully.

The speaker also uses biblical allusions in these lines which create tension between contemporary man versus the first man. Words such as "breath" and "spirit" recall the Genesis account of God breathing life into man. "Apple" and "eat" suggest the story of the first man in the Garden.

Most striking among these images is that of "Word" (line 42) with its capitol "W". This triggers memories of many scriptural passages, particularly the power of the Word of God in creation. (Genesis 1) and the Word of God becoming flesh (John 1).

These biblical allusions, when joined together with those images which suggest man as a cartoon figure, create a painful contrast. Thus, the words "behold the man" (line 37) causes a double reaction. On one hand, it brings to mind Pilate's words recorded in John, but applied to man in general, these words convey a rueful sarcasm.

These three poems, then, "A Way of Life," "Make Love Not War," and "Life Cycle of Common Man," vary in intensity of their satire and underline the condition of man in contemporary society. Their tone moves from a cautious attitude of tolerance to bitter rebellion and finally to a rueful awareness of man in society. Two of them also use biblical allusion to heighten their intensity. The message of all three poems invites man to take an active notice of the "Great Society" in which he lives.

SISTER ELAINE KINDLE S D S H

[1] *Howard Nemerov, "Life Cycle of Common Man," NEW AND SELECTED POEMS, (Chicago & London: The University of Chicago Press, 1960), p. 16.*

[2] *Howard Nemerov, THE BLUE SWALLOWS, (Chicago & London: The University of Chicago Press, 1967), p. 41. References hereafter are to this volume.*

Drawing by Sumiko Oi

FROM IMAGES TO ECSTASY

T.S. Eliot is a master in using words and images to convey his meanings, but he is still human. Like all men, he is confined to language as a medium for expressing his thoughts and emotions. Words cannot adequately describe all feelings and experiences, but these are man's best tools for

communication. As a result, man must use what is available until a more direct way is found.

Under this limitation, Eliot associates garden imagery with the theme of "union with God." This religious experience implies a deep meaningful relationship with the ultimate Reality, an experience beyond conceptual understanding. Yet, Eliot wants to communicate the meaning of this most powerful and consuming event. In order to do this, he must find a parallel within human experience.

The most common parallel for this complete relationship is the human experience of love. By remembering one's own experiences of love, one can equate the subsequent emotions and sensations to the feelings experienced in the union with God. Sexual love, as the most intimate relationship between two human beings, serves Eliot as a vehicle for expressing a nuptial union with God.

He equates the ecstasy of an initial sexual encounter to. the ecstasy found in the higher religious experience and uses sexual or garden imagery to depict that religious experience. There is evidence of much sexual imagery in Eliot's poetry but in the poem "Ash-Wednesday," the lower meanings are forgotten as one approaches the essence of union with God. As the poem's protagonist moves through his process of purgation losing all temporal desires, Eliot's garden imagery also loses its sexual connotations.

Before this transcendence can be shown, however, the dominant sexual implications of the garden imagery in Eliot's early poetry must be noted. In the poem "Dans le Restaurant," Eliot alludes to the initial sexual experience that is somehow lost as a man grows up.

> The willows drenched, and blossoms on the hedges—
> It is there, in a shower, that one takes shelter.
> I was seven, she was even younger.
> She was completely soaked, I gave her some primroses.
>
> I tickled her, in order to make her laugh.
> I experienced a moment of power and ecstasy.[1]

"The willows drenched," "blossoms on the hedges," and "primroses" provide a garden setting where "the moment of power and ecstasy" occurs. There is no religious meaning to

the feeling. Instead, the emotion is an immediate reaction to the events in the passage.

Eliot often refers to this ecstasy in his other writings and uses images of flowers, leaves, and fountains to describe it. In "Portrait of a Lady," the speaker remembers "a street piano, mechanical and tired" which

> Reiterates some worn-out common song
> With the smell of hyacinths across the garden
> Recalling things that other people have desired. (p.11)

Here, a popular song reminds the speaker of the lost experience, but that song is accompanied by "the smell of hyacinths across the garden." That "smell" brings back the memory of "things that other people have desired." On one level, the words "Recalling things that other people have desired" allude to the sexual desires that most human beings experience. This interpretation promotes the sexual implications of the passage but on another level, the poet later parallels the same forgotten memory to the ultimate religious experience. He is beginning gradually to develop his theme, and in "Ash-Wednesday" it is dramatized and conceptualized.

Eliot must still use the allusion to sexual imagery because he is human. He must draw on worldly emotions to depict the sensations felt in the spiritual experience. Even so, his development of the theme in "Ash-Wednesday" exceeds any sexual connotations. Eliot pulls the reader out of his normal frame of reference and gives him a glimpse of the glory and "stillness" of union with God. Through symbols conveyed by his words, Eliot begins to transcend his own language.

"Ash-Wednesday" is a devotional poem describing the process of purgation. The soul must purge itself and suffer before it can attain the ultimate Reality—"The right time and the right place" (p. 92). The poem's title gives evidence of its content. In Christian liturgy, Ash Wednesday marks the start of Lent—a season of sacrifice and humility. It is the beginning of a time in which each person prepares for the death and resurrection of the Son of God. Thus, each soul purges itself in the expectation of sharing in the ultimate symbol of Rebirth. The purgation that takes place in the

poem is similar to this seasonal and liturgical rite. The soul must cleanse itself from all worldly desires and temptations so that it can experience "religious ecstasy." In a sense, one dies to himself in order to live in the revelation of God.

In Section I of "Ash-Wednesday," the protagonist is caught in despair. His words "Because I do not hope to turn/ Desiring this man's gift and that man's scope/I no longer strive to strive towards such things" show that he realizes what he is searching for is not in the world. Yet, he does not believe he can ever achieve union with God.

> Because I do not hope to know again
> The infirm glory of the positive hour
> Because I do not think
> Because I know I shall not know
> The one veritable transitory power
> Because I cannot drink
> There, where trees flower, and springs flow,
> for there is nothing again (p. 85).

He is trapped. He cannot turn back to "The vanished power of the usual reign" and yet, he believes it is hopeless that he will ever experience religious ecstasy. Some experience in his life has allowed him a glimpse of the garden but now, before purgation has begun, he believes it will never return.

The image of the place "where trees flower, and springs flow" alludes to the ecstasy of Eliot's initial experience. Here, however, the garden signifies much more. To the protagonist, it is the symbol of life and spiritual redemption. As he rejoices "having to construct something/Upon which to rejoice," he begins to move out of his empty state. He is able to rejoice about the nothingness surrounding him and thus, his "resignation to inescapable misery" leads to the positive experience of rejoicing.[2]

Like Dante's Beatrice, a Lady leads him through the purgation. As the poem moves into Section II, the protagonist sees in her the hope of eventual salvation. She is a "Rose" that evokes both memory and forgetfulness and once again, the protagonist is reminded of some distant experience of ecstasy. Now, however, "The single Rose/Is now the Garden/ Where all loves end." Any sexual connotations have been for-

gotten because he recognizes the futility of physical love alone. The torment of unsatisfied physical love becomes a greater torment when it is satisfied because there is no lasting ecstasy or essence. The soul is still dissatisfied and searching. It is only in "the Garden/Where all love ends" that one experiences a spiritual union so complete and full that it transcends any earthly concept of love.

This Lady foreshadows the glory of the religious experience and at the same time, Eliot develops his garden theme by taking it beyond ordinary meaning. Since he must use a familiar experience to describe his theme, it is still remotely connected to the sexual experience. Now, however, he severs the relationship with the lines "The single Rose/Is now the Garden." That hint of ecstasy has grown and blossomed into the "Garden" and once one knows this state, all worldly delights and references disappear. As the protagonist recognizes that temporal desires are nothing compared to the religious experience, the garden imagery itself moves out of its sexual connotations. Unfortunately not even T.S. Eliot can precisely describe this experience. He can only put words into meaning that reaches within the soul to some central core of understanding where there is "Conclusion of all that/ Is inconclusible/Speech without word and/Word of no speech."

With the vision before him, the protagonist begins his ascent toward complete purgation in Section III. Here, Eliot uses stairs to symbolize the climb toward that experience. The protagonist has passed "the devil of the stairs who wears/ The deceitful face of hope and of despair." Neither hope nor despair will help him. Only the purging of all selfish desires and temptations will bring him to his goal. Yet, he soon meets temptation.

> At the first turning of the third stair
> Was a slotted window bellied like the fig's fruit
> And beyond the hawthorn blossom and a pasture scene
> The broadbacked figure drest in blue and green
> Enchanted the maytime with an antique flute. (p.89)

The "slotted window bellied like the fig's fruit" invites him to enjoy "the hawthorn blossom" and the "pasture scene." Here, garden imagery recalls the human sexual experience of

love. The fig has been a traditional sexual symbol for centuries, and "The broadbacked figure drest in blue and green" alludes to the fertility figures found in many ancient societies.

In Section II of the poem, the protagonist realized the dissatisfaction of temporal desires but in Section III, their strong power is still tempting. The pleasures of this vivid sexual imagery distract him. He can hear "the music of the flute," and it tempts him to renounce purgation. But with "strength beyond hope and despair" he continues to climb. He leaves the lower meanings of the garden theme to find the ultimate Reality.

To some extent, the garden imagery has slipped back into its sexual connotations. In Section IV, however, Eliot quickly reminds us of the higher meaning of the garden imagery. The critic Leonard Unger suggests the Lady who walks "between the violet and the violet" is a symbol of the partner in the protagonist's initial experience.[3] It was through that first experience that the protagonist glimpsed the ecstasy of the higher Reality. This may be so, but the protagonist is no longer concerned with the past. The strong fountains and fresh springs are beckoning and for him, the past "ecstasy" only serves as the vision of the higher dream. He wants to "Redeem the unread vision in the higher dream." He does not want to redeem the initial experience, but rather, he wants to redeem the "ecstasy" or moment of revelation that he felt in that encounter.

In Section V, the protagonist contemplates his direction. He wonders "Where shall the word be found, where will the word/Resound?" and if he will ever attain his goal. He also wonders if "the veiled sister" will "pray for/Those who walk in darkness" and "who are torn on the horn between season and season." He is at a critical point where he must wait and suffer, and he feels the need of guidance. He is "In the last desert between the last blue rocks" but "The desert is in the garden the garden in the desert/Of drouth." This "desert" or "darkness" where he is still being purged will lead to the "garden." He must suffer this state until he is ready for redemption.

As the poem ends, the protagonist is still in the same

state. However, the temptations which he has denied linger.

And the lost heart stiffens and rejoices
In the lost lilac and the lost sea voices
And the weak spirit quickens to rebel
For the bent golden-rod and the lost sea smell (p. 94).

The images of "the lost heart" stiffening and rejoicing "In the lost lilac and the lost sea voices" is nostalgic. It implies that the protagonist can still remember temporal delights. In addition, the luring images of "the bent golden-rod and the lost sea smell" remind him of the world, but he is beyond its power in "the time of tension between dying and birth." He has not been completely purged, but he calls for the help of the "Blessed sister" who is the "spirit of the fountain, spirit of the garden." He accepts this time knowing that he must wait, but he lives in it with the faith that the "spirit of the garden" will hear his "cry."

The garden is his ultimate goal and there, he will find the "stillness" of union with God. Thus, the garden imagery has moved beyond the sexual experience into a world of transcendence. The protagonist is not the only one who has moved towards the higher state. T.S. Eliot has also created meanings of the garden which go beyond the imagery of his own initial human experience. Through the protagonist's purgation, the poet's words are also purged so that their meaning shines clear. His images cut free of their associations and describe the experience in meanings that touch some essence within a person that is beyond conceptual understanding.

MONICA GREENING

[1] *T.S. Eliot, "Dans le Restaurant," T.S. ELIOT COLLECTED POEMS 1909–1962 (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1963), p. 43. This book will be cited, henceforth, by page reference in my text.*

[2] *Leonard, Unger, "Ash-Wednesday," T.S. ELIOT: A SELECTED CRITIQUE, ed. Leonard Unger (New York: Rinehart & Company, Inc., 1948), p. 355.*

[3] *Unger, p. 365.*

DUSK DREAMER

Dusk descends, the moon a sliver,
The air, shiver sharp.
Trees shrink like shadows.
Wind-caught leaves scatter.
Lights jewel their vigil until dawn.
Dark dissolves. Wonder stays.

SISTER ALICIA McNALLY, SSL